APPENDIX A

Medical Center
1111 East End Boulevard
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18711

Veterans Administration

In Reply Refer To:

December 30, 1988

Mr. Jack H. Kroll
Assistant Inspector General for Policy,
Planning and Resources
Office of Inspector General (53E)
Veterans Administration
810 Vermont Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20420

Re: IG Control Number 8HO-454

Dear Mr. Kroll:

I reported another Nurse Practitioner resignation to you, in my letter of December 9, 1988, that of Ms. Marcia Ohnesorge. I now enclose a copy of her resignation letter, directed to the Chief of Nursing. It is self-explanatory.

The delivery of Medical care continues to deteriorate in the Nursing Home Care Unit and in the Rheumatology Clinics, at the Wilkes-Barre Veterans Hospital. As you know, Dr. Richardson, my direct supervisor, has assigned me Nurse Practitioner duties, and as a result I have been unable to function as a full-time Rheumatologist. Specifically, I am not permitted to perform Inpatient Consultations. Please see Dr. Brucker's progress note, enclosed.

This is a serious incident, in that Dr. Brucker, as an ophthalmologist, was concerned enough to have me evaluate one of her patient's, for a Rheumatic Disease that can lead to

sudden blindness, Temporal Arteritis. The best this Veterans Hospital had to offer this patient was an outpatient appointment, in May 1989! I've enclosed a sampling of other similar cases.

Well, this got to be quite a problem, so now this Hospital has hired an outside Rheumatologist, at additional cost, to do what the taxpayer is already paying for! As a consequence, my clinics are now backed-up, with a better than 6 month wait for an appointment. I now average 1-2 telephone calls a day from patients asking what's going on. I've enclose a sample letter from one of my patients.

How do you justify assigning a double-boarded physician (Internal Medicine and Rheumatology) Nurse Practitioner duties. and then hiring at additional cost, an outside Rheumatologist to do Inpatient Rheumatology Consultations? Because many of these patients will end up back in my clinic, their quality of care is compromised by lack of continuity. Continuity of care takes on special significance in the treatment of the Rheumatic Diseases, for example, in Rheumatoid Arthritis, in that, therapeutic efficacy is evaluated over long periods of time (months), and serial observations by the same observer enhance the patient's chances of a better outcome.

I believe the above examples represent further mismanagement and retaliatory behavior, on the parts of Dr. Stuart Richardson, Associate Chief of Staff for Ambulatory Care, Dr. William Grossman, Chief of Staff, and Mr. Michael Parrell, Hospital Director.

I hope your Office would address these new concerns which have evolved since my original letter, August 15, 1988. Just a reminder, that my original concerns in that letter, still remain unanswered.

Thank you.

/s/ David A. Shaller, M.D.
DAVID A. SHALLER, M.D.
Chief, Rheumatology Section
Chief Physician, Nursing Home Care

Enclosures: 1. Resignation letter of Ms. Ohnesorge, RN, CRNP, December 6, 1988.
2. Dr. Brucker's Progress note, November 8, 1988. (I have re-typed it for easier reading)
3. Samples (five) of Rheumatology Consultations. (Assignment of Nurse Practitioner duties prohibits performing of Inpatient Consultations.)
4. Sample; a Patient's Letter to me regarding the chaos in the Rheumatology Clinics. (December 16, 1988).

cc: Representative Paul Kanjorski
10 E. South Street Building
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701

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John A. Gronvall, M.D.
Chief, Medical Director
Veterans Administration
810 Vermont Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C 20420

Date: 12-6-88
To: Chief, Nursing Service
From: Marcia Ohnesorge CRNP

I cannot continue in a work situation in which there is long term lack of attention on the part of both medical and nursing administrations to patient care and safety issues, adequate staffing, and practice safety concerns (1). Demands are unreasonable (2); dialogue is discouraged (3); distortions are common (4); errors continue uncorrected (5). Therefore, I submit my resignation effective 12-9-88.

/s/ Marcia Ohnesorge

(1) Nurse Practitioner memos of 2-9-88, 3-17-88, 5-27-88, 8-29-88, 9-12-88 (two), 11-3-88, 11-17-88, 11-21-88, and grievance statement of 10-17-88.
(2) NP memos of 2-9-88, 5-27-88, 8-29-88, 11-21-88, page 3 of written self evaluation submitted to ACNSEC 8-18-88, NP coverage of VA Nursing Homes 9-88, and grievance statement of 10-17-88.
(3) NP memos of 3-17-88, 10-26-88, 11-17-88.
(4) NP memos of 10-26-88, 11-17-88.
(5) NP memos of 10-26-88, 11-17-88.

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Dr. Brucker's Progress Note

11-8-88

Spoke with Dr. Shaller—patient cannot be seen since he's no time for rheumatology consults because of nursing home duties. Dr. Richardson cannot provide coverage for nursing home, in order for Dr. Shaller to do consults.

Plan: Sed Rate
Start on Motrin 600 mg.
Return on Thursday, if sed rate (?)
W. Krause Brucker

Dr. Brucker discussed my unavailability with Dr. Richardson.

MEDICAL RECORD CONSULTATION SHEET

TO: Chief, Medical Service FROM: 5 WEST #24 DATE: 11/14/88

REASON FOR REQUEST: (*Complaints and findings)*

RHEUMATOLOGY CONSULT: 62 y/o/ w/m with h/o COPD on ventilator has persistant low back pain NSAIDS have little effect. Xrays of LS spine reveal no ampression fracture, but steoporests. Please evaluate & advise.

PROVISIONAL DIAGNOSIS:

DX: EMPHYSCMA w/ RESPIRATORY FAILURE REQUIRING MECH. VENTILATION.

DOCTOR'S SIGNATURE: /s/ Dr. Kuchemba

Dr. Kuchemba/sw

CONSULTATION REPORT:

I am unable to see this patient on consultation—
per my supervisor—Dr. Richardson.
Please schedule as an outpatient.

SIGNATURE AND TITLE: /s/ D. Shaller DATE: 11-15-88

PATIENT:

Redaction: The original included patients name & hospital number

Consultation sheet
Standard form 513 (Rev. 9-77

MEDICAL RECORD CONSULTATION SHEET

TO: Chief Medical Service FROM: 7 east bed 22 DATE: 11/10/88

REASON FOR REQUEST: (*Complaints and findings)*

RHEUMATOLOGY CONSULT

39 year old with alcohol abuse and history of hepatitis found to have ankylosing spondylitis in Allentown VA Clinic. Please evaluate and make recommendations.

PROVISIONAL DIAGNOSIS:

hepatomegaly.

DOCTOR'S SIGNATURE: /s/ Dr. Obazee

Dr. Obazee

CONSULTATION REPORT:

(As discussed w/ Dr. Sleth on 11-10-88)

I am unable to see this patient on consultation—

per my supervisor—Dr. Richardson.

Please schedule as an outpatient.

SIGNATURE AND TITLE: /s/ D. Shaller DATE: 11-15-88

PATIENT:

Redaction: The original included patients name & hospital number

Consultation sheet

Standard form 513 (Rev. 9-77

MEDICAL RECORD CONSULTATION SHEET

TO: Chief of Medical Service FROM: 6 WEST DATE: Nov. 10, 1988

REASON FOR REQUEST: (*Complaints and findings)*

RHEUMATOLOGY CONSULT: A 68 year old white male known to you, continues to have left second toe cyanosis, please evaluate if anything else can be offered.

PROVISIONAL DIAGNOSIS:

Scleroderma

DOCTOR'S SIGNATURE: /s/ Dr. Ojha

Dr. Ojha/lo

CONSULTATION REPORT:

(As discussed with Dr. Ojha on 11-10-88)

I am unable to see this patient on consultation—

per my supervisor—Dr. Richardson.

Please schedule as an outpatient.

SIGNATURE AND TITLE: /s/ D. Shaller DATE: 11-15-88

PATIENT:

Redaction: The original included patients name & hospital number

Consultation sheet

Standard form 513 (Rev. 9-77

MEDICAL RECORD CONSULTATION SHEET

TO: Chief Medical Service FROM: 5 East Bed 41 DATE: 11-30-88

REASON FOR REQUEST: (*Complaints and findings)*

RHEUMATOLOGY CONSULT: with Dr. Shaller: 66 YOWM presents with h/o arthritis and now has severe R hip pain with large swelling and induration of R gluteal area. Please evaluate for possible etiology. Lumbar spine series and R leg x-ray were seen as negative studies. Patient's R gluteal area is hot to touch, thank you.

PROVISIONAL DIAGNOSIS:

H/O Arthritis

DOCTOR'S SIGNATURE: Dr. Huskey/ly

CONSULTATION REPORT:

As per our discussion.
I am unable to see this patient on consultation—
per my supervisor—Dr. Richardson.
Please schedule as an outpatient.

SIGNATURE AND TITLE: /s/ Shaller DATE: 11-30-88

PATIENT:

Redaction: The original included patients name & hospital number

Consultation sheet
Standard form 513 (Rev. 9-77

MEDICAL RECORD CONSULTATION SHEET

TO: Chief Medical Service FROM: 5 East Bed 44 DATE: 11-29-88

REASON FOR REQUEST: (*Complaints and findings)*

Rheumatology Consult—65 year old white male with 3 months history of left knee pain with mild swelling of the knee joint. R/O DJD versus traumatic arthritis. Please evaluate and advise.

PROVISIONAL DIAGNOSIS:

AD R/O Rheumatoid arthritis, monoarticular

DOCTOR'S SIGNATURE: /s/ Dr. Banalagay

Dr. Banalagay-hk

CONSULTATION REPORT:

I am unable to see this patient on consultation—
per my supervisor—Dr. Richardson.
Please schedule as an outpatient.

SIGNATURE AND TITLE: /s/ Shaller DATE: 11-30-88

PATIENT:

Redaction: The original included patients name & hospital number

Consultation sheet
Standard form 513 (Rev. 9-77

December 16 1988

Dear Dr. Shaller:

Received letter dated Dec. 14 1988 cancelling another appointment. This is the fourth since my last appointment at the clinic if there is a reason or do you feel that there is nothing further you can medically do for me. I would appreciate a confirmation on this matter and if there is nothing further you feel you can do, Please prescribe something that I may take to help sleep at nights and maybe you can keep my next scheduled appointment.

Thank you.

Patient's name and number redacted.